

What to Expect from your Energy Audit Report

Important Notes for Reviewing your Report

Your audit report should include a **comprehensive list of recommendations** for making your home more energy efficient. Many of these recommendations will be familiar, since your contractor likely mentioned them to you during the energy audit. Things to keep in mind as you review your report:

- You are under no obligation to complete any of the recommended improvements.
- If any of the recommendations do not make sense to you, ask for clarification.
- Each recommendation should be listed with a price tag.
- Each recommendation may also be listed with its estimated energy savings. If not, ask your contractor to explain what they think your energy savings might be, and which recommendations will yield the most energy savings.
- Ask which recommendations will generate the most increase in home comfort.
- Ask which recommendations will address any issues you are concerned about (e.g. ice dams, moisture)
- While it's OK not to complete ALL of the recommendations at once, try to do as much as you possibly can. It will always be most cost effective to do it all at once. Ask about financing options to help you afford a larger project.
- Ask for help narrowing your workscope. It is your contractor's job to help you select the right combination of recommended improvements to meet your budget and priorities. Some recommendations won't work unless combined with others.
- If you choose to move ahead, it is common practice to hire the contractor who completed your energy audit to complete your weatherization project. Hiring a different contractor is not recommended.
- If you are handy, you can ask your contractor which recommendations (or parts of recommendations) could be completed by you as a do-it-yourself project.
- If you qualify for NHSaves rebates, your report will clearly define how much NHSaves will pay toward each recommended measure. NHSaves must approve of your final work scope and may require you to commit to a certain minimum work scope in order for rebates to apply. Your contractor will handle this approval process for you and ensure your project is eligible for rebates.

Common Energy Efficiency Recommendations

- **Air sealing** – Addresses a variety of gaps, cracks, penetrations, and other holes that allow cold air to enter and heat to escape from your home. Often, air sealing is focused on the rim joist in the basement or crawlspace, plumbing and wiring penetrations, recessed lighting, around chimneys and attic hatches, and fans and ventilation systems. Weather-stripping may also be recommended for exterior doors and sometimes windows. Air sealing should always be done before insulation is installed, and works best when installed in conjunction with insulation upgrades.
- **Cellulose** – An insulation product made of reclaimed paper saturated with a borate mixture to resist fire, mold, rodents, and insects. Cellulose is non-toxic and can be applied in a variety of ways. Attics typically have loose-fill or blown-in cellulose where a layer of the product blankets the floor of the attic after air sealing measures are completed. Cellulose insulation can also be blown into wall cavities and other enclosed spaces, often called dense-pack cellulose because filling wall cavities requires greater air pressure and a denser fill than blowing insulation for an attic.

- **Rigid foam insulation** – Sheets of stiff foam, a few inches thick, with a lot of insulating power per inch of thickness. Rigid foam sheets can be cut or assembled to cover any sized surface and are commonly used to insulate attic hatch doors, box sills, and concrete basement walls.
- **Spray foam** – A closed-cell polyurethane spray foam that air seals and insulates in one step. Spray foam can be blown into walls, attic spaces, and between floor joists to insulate and reduce air leakage. It can also be used to seal air leaks around window and door frames, and electrical and plumbing penetrations. To insulate an entire attic or basement, professional installers mix a two-part foam that expands once sprayed on. During installation, **you and your pets will need to vacate your home for a few days until the foam cures and the fumes air out.** Once cured, the foam does not off-gas.

Your recommendations will likely focus on air sealing and insulation improvements in the basement and attic, where the majority of heat loss occurs in most homes. **Your recommendations typically will NOT include:**

- **Replacing windows** (not cost effective from an energy standpoint unless you are already planning to replace windows for other reasons)
- **Adding insulation in your walls** (often difficult and less effective than adding insulation in the attic and basement, unless you are replacing siding or refinishing rooms with exterior walls anyway)

Health and Safety

All Weatherize Hanover contractors are certified by the national **Building Performance Institute**, which means they take an integrated approach to how a home's systems work together, with a focus on home health, safety, durability, energy efficiency, and comfort. As a result, **there may be health and safety recommendations included in your report.** Common health and safety recommendations that **MUST** be addressed before any weatherization work can be completed (this list is not comprehensive):

- Removal of knob and tube wiring
- Removal of vermiculite (funding available for some homeowners at www.zaitrust.com)
- Radon remediation
- Mold remediation

Contract and Terms

Your audit report will likely include an addendum stating your contractor's terms. Pay attention to workmanship guarantees, the length of time that the offer is valid, quality assurance mechanisms, and other terms and conditions. If anything doesn't make sense to you, ask your contractor to clarify.

If you qualify for NHSaves rebates, pay attention to the deadline imposed by NHSaves for committing to a weatherization project. If you do not abide by that deadline, NHSaves might give your rebate to someone else. NHSaves is able to extend its deadlines upon request, but only if you and your contractor clearly communicate that you need more time and still plan on moving ahead.